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EUROPEAN INFLUENCES IN ASIA.

FOR more than a thousand years Asia has been subjected to the influences of Europe. They began with the overland commerce that was largely controlled by the Italian republics, and were continued and expanded by the Portuguese, who had almost a monopoly of Oriental traffic for nearly a hundred years. Then came the Dutch and English with their powerful East India companies, which obtained the right of eminent domain and ruled the Orient with a hand of iron down to a very recent date. French and Danish East India companies were of brief existence, but the Dutch company flourished and became wealthy through its monopoly of trade, the oppression of the natives, and the exclusion of other Europeans than its own agents and people. Wars in Europe compelled its dissolution in 1795. Its successor, the *Handel Maatschapij*, or Trading Association, organized in 1824, had no such exclusive powers as the old company, though enough remains to make its business profitable. Probably no single association of men has ever exerted as much influence upon the commerce and civilization of the world as the English East India Company, which began in A.D. 1600 and practically continued without interruption down to the Indian mutiny in 1857. An association of merchants sent to the East in 1601 a fleet of five ships, the largest of 600 tons burden ; in twenty years it had obtained land and established trading stations at half a dozen points in India, and also in Java, Sumatra, Siam, and several islands of the Malay archipelago. Its fleets increased, and so did the tonnage of the company's ships, and it is not surprising that in course of time it required an army to protect its interests. In 1661 it was authorized to make peace or war with any power not of the Christian religion, and it lost no time in making use of its authority. We are probably indebted to "John Company," as this powerful corporation was known in the East,

for the historic preamble and resolutions, sometimes attributed to the Pilgrim Fathers : "Whereas, it has been decreed that the saints shall inherit the earth ; therefore Resolved, that we are the saints." Said the Duke of Alva, on his death-bed, "I leave no enemies behind me ; I've shot them all." John Company had a peaceful monopoly of commerce in the East, as it allowed no interlopers to establish competition, and silenced as far as possible all accounts of oppression of the natives in the interest of its coffers or of the private purses of its officials. Native potentates were instructed by the logic of the sword, rather than by documentary argument, and the English musket had a weighty influence in teaching the advantages of commerce with the white stranger from the land beyond the seas. Rivals from other nations were not to be tolerated ; the Portuguese were reduced to the single possession of Goa, with a population of not more than half a million ; the Dutch were expelled from Ceylon, where they had a valuable commerce ; and *Les Indes Orientales Françaises*, which once covered a large part of the great Indian peninsula, now include Pondicherry, Mahé, and Chandernagore, with fewer than two hundred thousand inhabitants. Just before its extinction the English East India Company ruled a territory containing two hundred million people. It had a standing army of 240,000 soldiers, its commerce had extended to China and other parts of the East, and its board of directors formed a court from whose decisions there was no appeal. Its charter came up for renewal once in twenty years, and from Elizabeth to Victoria the British sovereigns had signed it with little or no hesitation. There was every prospect that the charter would again be granted in 1858 ; but the mutiny of '57 attracted the attention of Government and people to the misrule of India, and with one stroke of the royal pen the Company was blotted out, and its vast interests and responsibilities were transferred to the Crown.

To point a moral rather than to adorn a tale, have I sketched the history of John Company through a period covering more than two and a half centuries. To the Company we owe much for the spread of occidental ideas in India from 1600 to 1857, but we owe a great deal more to the Government that succeeded it for the progress of the work since that time. The Company was organized and managed for the sole purpose of making money, and if India derived benefit from its operations, the event was not due to any philanthropic ideas of the board of directors. Since the mu-

tiny things have changed greatly for the better. India is still held and managed mainly for commercial purposes, and to afford places for surplus men of the upper class, and the British gush about "our noble mission in the East" must be taken with a good many pinches of salt, or rejected altogether; but commerce has been thrown open to everybody, and no company or individual has any longer a monopoly; many restrictions upon the natives have been removed or greatly modified, and the condition of the subject race is vastly improved. In 1857 there were but two hundred miles of railway in operation in all that enormous peninsula—one line of a hundred and twenty miles northward from Calcutta, and another of eighty miles from Bombay. Now there are eight thousand miles of railway in India, and the iron horse has an unbroken track from Cape Comorin, where he sniffs the spicy breezes of Ceylon, to Darjeeling or Peshawur, where he drinks from the melted snows of the Himalayas. He can traverse the country from Bombay to Calcutta by way of Allahabad and Benares, and before long he will have a shorter route through the Nagpore Hills. Steamers ply along the coast and upon the rivers, the telegraph line is everywhere, native newspapers are in all the towns, and the mails are transported with the certainty, security, and celerity that are made the conditions of contracts for postal transportation.

Steam is the most efficient missionary that India has ever known; not all the teachings of St. Francis Xavier and his followers, nor the eloquence of Bishop Heber, who lies entombed at Madras, can equal the work of the fleshless steed of George Stephenson. The locomotive has shaken the faith of the Hindoo more than centuries of Christian teaching, and brought confusion and perplexity to the heart of the native priest. Pilgrimages have been enjoined upon the faithful from time immemorial. A century ago a pilgrimage was a serious matter, and the devotee that journeyed on foot to the holy places of Benares, Allahabad, or Jagannath was absent from his home for months, and perhaps for years. The wealthy worshiper, traveling with all the luxury of the East, was compelled to move leisurely, and could not make his pilgrimage without a liberal expenditure of time. At present the railway shortens the road of the pilgrim to a wonderful degree; and four classes of carriages are run by the Indian companies, so that poor and rich are provided for. The priests have sought to compel their followers to make their pilgrimages on foot, as before; but,

unhappily for them, the sacred books do not specify the mode of reaching a holy place, so long as it is reached at all. Little or no attention is given to the commands of the religious teachers, and the fourth-class trains are crowded to their utmost capacity during the season of pilgrimage. The nabob on a similar mission charts an entire carriage for himself and family, and is whirled to the place of worship by an express train. The magic of the white man is more potent than the ordinances of the priests, who are seeking for new light by which to control their unruly subjects, but thus far have found none. The motion of the railway wagon is shaking the religions of India till they threaten to crumble in fragments.

Caste, too, is being destroyed by the iron horse and the road on which he runs. Under the rules of caste, the population is divided into four great bodies, with numerous subdivisions. A man of a high caste cannot touch one of a lower without being polluted; under the native laws in some parts of India, a Brahmin had the right to slay a Sudra that touched him ever so lightly by the merest accident, or even allowed his shadow to fall upon him. A man may not drink from a cup, or eat of rice cooked in a kettle, that has been used by a member of a lower caste; and if a Sudra in the disguise of a Brahmin should mingle with a dozen Brahmins, the innocent twelve would be polluted to a degree that would require long and costly penances to restore them to a condition of purity. I was once on a steamer going up the eastern coast of India, where three or four Brahmins were nearly starved to death by the accidental breaking of their cooking-pot; every other pot on board had been touched by the detested European, or the equally detested Moslem servants, and was therefore polluted, and of course the pearly rice cooked in the ship's galley was the very embodiment of wickedness. They were four days without food, and were more dead than alive when the steamer reached Calcutta. The railways do not make provision for the separation of castes, other than allowing those who can afford it to buy the exclusive right to compartments or carriages. In the third and fourth class carriages all castes are bundled in together—Sudras, Brahmins, Vaisyas, Pariahs, *et id omne genus*. A railway pilgrimage is like poverty in that it makes strange bed-fellows. The pilgrims sit on long benches running athwart the carriages, and the Brahmins congratulate themselves that by sitting carefully away from their inferiors they can avoid pollution. But the rolling of the carriages around the curves, the

bustle at the stations, the hurry of entering or leaving the vehicle, together with other things incident to the journey, spoil the charm, and the pilgrims are mixed up worse than were the infant charges of little Buttercup. The polluted Brahmin decides to keep the matter to himself, to avoid the trouble and expense of restoration to purity ; soon he finds he has suffered no bodily or spiritual harm, and in course of time his reason tells him that the whole caste business is an absurdity. His dread of pollution is at an end or is greatly shaken, and while he has been learning respect for those beneath him, the lower castes have been losing reverence and fear of those that rank higher.

The railway in India performs the same office as in other parts of the world, in facilitating commerce and distributing the products of the soil or the sea. The coast communicates rapidly with the interior, and the interior with the coast ; the fruits of the hill regions are exchanged for those of the plains and the maritime country—the orange for the mango, and the cocoanut for the durian ; and in this way the people are taught that the world is not bounded by their horizon, and the blessings of all parts of the country are more evenly distributed than ever before. European modes of work and European ways of transacting business are being steadily diffused, and it is safe to say that the effect of the western civilization in the land of the Shastas and the Vedas has been greater during twenty-five years since the extinction of John Company than in any entire century preceding it.

Let us turn now to Java and the Malay archipelago. With the exception of four years, from 1811 to 1816, Java has been a Dutch possession in one form or another for about the same time that the English have been established in India. Down to 1830 the country made comparatively little progress in the adoption of European civilization, but since then there has been a wonderful advance in that direction. To the genius of General Van Den Bosch, regarded in his day as a visionary dreamer whose schemes were utterly impracticable, Java is indebted for the culture system that has dotted the island with prosperous villages tenanted by an industrious people, covered the whole region with well-tilled farms, and established a system of roads that render every locality accessible. Railways extend inland from the three principal ports, and before long they will be stretched from one end of the island to the other. Thirty thousand Europeans hold twenty millions of natives

in subjection ; the administration of the government is costly, and money is expended freely for public works ; but after paying all expenses the Dutch East Indies deliver annually five million dollars into the home treasury. Java is one of the most densely peopled countries in the world, averaging 337 persons to the square mile. The population has trebled since 1826, and the recent earthquake may have been a providential dispensation to reduce the rapid growth of the census-tables. Travel through the length and breadth of Java, and you will rarely see a beggar ; good order prevails everywhere, and there are no idlers, for the simple reason that the Government compels every man to be industrious, and guarantees him the reward of his labor. Doubtless the native princes may wish to return to the old system, but there are few of the lower classes who would favor it. The same conditions prevail in a general way through the whole of the Malay archipelago ; the Dutch rule is by no means mild, but it is less rigorous than was that of the Dutch East India Company, and is far preferable to the constant warfare with which the native princes managed to kill time and their neighbors.

The most important part of Burmah is under British rule. Steamers navigate the Irrawaddy to its head-waters, while the railway extends to the frontier of the native kingdom, and will soon be at the gates of Mandalay, the capital. Siam preserves its independence unimpaired, but its capital city shows many evidences of the influence of the Occident. Its enlightened young king has adopted many of the customs of the West, and is an earnest student of our civilization. His army is officered by foreigners, is equipped with foreign weapons, and is drilled after the manner of Europe ; he has established a postal system through the aid of the American Minister, and his kingdom has been admitted to the Postal Union ; the telegraph connects Bangkok with the other capitals of the globe, and the Siamese flag floats above a fleet of steamers plying on the Menam and forming a regular line to Singapore. The Malay peninsula is largely under British control, and the port of Singapore is one of the most important commercial centers of the Orient. Farther to the east are Cochin-China and Cambodia, under French domination ; and quite recently the tri-color has been extending its influence into the territory claimed by China, the greatest, oldest, and most populous empire of the world. The French are spreading the ideas of the West with the aid of

the chassepot and the mitrailleuse, in the same way that the English have carried the blessings of commerce to the people of India with the musket and sabre.

In the interest of commerce, England made war upon China and compelled her to buy the opium that was the chief export of India; and the entering wedge made by the opium war has been slowly but surely driven till the wall of seclusion is everywhere broken down. Foreigners may now travel unrestricted from end to end of China, though they run occasional risks from a lawless mob, and the foreign merchant enjoys commercial privileges that are denied to the native. The Chinese were quick to perceive the advantages of Western civilization in some of its features, and have adopted them, somewhat to the discomfiture of the intruders. There are banks, shipping houses, and insurance companies on the western system, wholly capitalized and managed by Chinese, and there are Chinese steamboat and steamship companies plying on the great rivers and along the coast. In the open ports the Chinese are steadily encroaching upon the business formerly monopolized by foreigners; in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Saigon, Chinese merchants are supplanting the stranger and driving him into bankruptcy. A navy and an army have been created upon the European model; Chinese dockyards are building ships of war like those of the great maritime powers; and Chinese arsenals at Tientsin, Shanghai, Foochow, and Canton are making Remington rifles, 2,700 daily, and a proportionate number of Gatling and Nordenfeldt guns. Two hundred thousand Chinese soldiers are armed and drilled in the European fashion, and the number can be increased as fast as it can be provided with weapons. Less than twenty-five years ago an American adventurer named Ward organized an army of a thousand men for the capture of Soo-Chow; it soon grew to three thousand, and under his successors—Burgevine first, and then Gordon—its strength and fame increased. So triumphant was its course that it became known as the “Ever-Victorious;” and from that germ has come the Chinese army of to-day. What may another twenty-five years develop? Some there are who foresee the expulsion of the foreigner from China through the arts and arms we have given to the Orient. Nothing is so abundant in China as men, and a population of four hundred millions could muster an army of two, or four, or ten millions without a serious drain upon its resources. May there not

be, in the next quarter of a century, another Genghis Khan, or another Tamerlane, who will roll the Orient upon the Occident over the route that was followed centuries ago by the great conquerors?

Corea, the Hermit Nation, has recently opened her doors to the West and its influences, having first opened them to her neighbors, Japan and China. The whole of Siberia, from the Ural Mountains to the littoral of the Pacific and the Arctic Ocean, is under Western rule, and the events that have followed the European tours of the Shah of Persia give promise of a rapid decrease in the despotic powers of that monarch. Telegraph lines are stretched over the length and breadth of his dominions, the railway is in the near future, and the European populations of Teheran, Tabreez, Astera-bad, and other cities grows numerically and influentially greater year by year. Russian soldiers are carrying their flag southward over the great plains and through the mountain chains of Central Asia, simultaneously with the northward advance of the English from India. The skirmishers of the armies of two powerful nations are confronting each other in the mountains of Afghanistan, and at any moment may come the news of battle beneath the walls of Herat.

Last but by no means least of the countries of Asia that have received the teachings and influences of the West, comes Japan. Within the memory of men hardly yet in middle life, Japan remained closed to the world, save at the little island of Deshima in the harbor of Nagasaki, where for two centuries the Dutch had maintained a trading-post. In 1854 American audacity, under the pretext of an errand of charity, forced an entrance, and the story of Japan since that time reads like a romance. The whole system of government has been changed. The Emperor, once secluded from the gaze of all but a very few of the most favored mortals, now appears in public and can be seen by his most humble subject; the *daimios* or feudal princes have been shorn of their power; the *samurai* or military class no longer subsist upon the labor of the rest of the population, but must earn their living; equality for all has been established by imperial decree; and Japanese etiquette no longer requires a man to disembowel himself because another has affronted him. More than in China, and more than in India, European customs have been adopted in Japan; the railway and the telegraph, the postal and banking systems, insurance, coinage, and many other institutions have been taken from Europe and

America, including an inflated currency of paper, impaired national credit, and impending repudiation. Let us hope, for the reputation of our part of the world, that the latter will be long deferred. Japan has even gone so far as to adopt the dress of Europe; the tasteful clothing of Nippon has been laid aside for the dress coat and its appurtenances, and the nation has lost greatly in picturesqueness. A Japanese is as much out of place in our western garb as we should be in his. The Oriental rarely appears to advantage in the garments of the Occident, and it was a most unfortunate day for Japan when the imperial decree was issued prescribing European dress for occasions of ceremony. The progress of Japan toward the civilization of the West has been, in the opinion of some of its friends, more rapid than was judicious, and there have been fears of a reaction. Such an event is not by any means impossible, but the old-time seclusion can never be restored, and Japan is destined to remain among the accessible nations of the world. With an army on the European model, with a navy of her own construction, with fleets of her own steamers plying along the coast and to foreign ports, with the railway and the telegraph, and with schools where the learning of the whole world is taught to intelligent youths and to men of middle age, Japan has undergone a change little short of miraculous since the day when Commodore Perry anchored his fleet in the shadow of Fusiyama, and trained his guns upon the osier walls of the forts of Shinagawa.

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